

BROTHER CLOUD, STOP DEFENDING YOURSELF

August 24, 2011 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Some of my readers have expressed the opinion that I spend too much time defending myself.

I have a right to defend myself, but this thinking is a misunderstanding of what I am doing.

Take the series of “Replies to My Warning about Lancaster’s Music,” which I published in February and March.

The Lord being my witness and if I know my own heart at all, I did not publish those to defend myself or to say, “See, I am right!” I don’t need that type of feedback to know I am right on these issues, because the Holy Spirit has taught me that through God’s Word and my position has been unchanging through the years. The first book I wrote in 1974 was on the spiritual and moral dangers of rock music. No, I didn’t publish those things to puff myself up or to defend myself. I published them to help God’s people see that they are not alone in thinking that such things as the adaptation of CCM is dead wrong and spiritually dangerous. Further, the comments from readers were spiritually discerning and wise, and I knew they would be helpful to some of my readers, many of whom are in churches that are not strong (for the simple fact that there is no better church in the area). Those articles were teaching tools.

Take the recent article, “Reply to a Preacher Who Says I am Arrogant and Vindictive” (August 22, 2011).

I printed that preacher’s e-mail with my reply after praying about it a few days and considering before the Lord whether it would be helpful for my readers. The Lord being my witness, the publication of that had nothing to do with defending myself. I have already done that sufficiently on these particular issues, and my mind is at peace. I’m not discouraged in the least. In fact, by God’s grace I’ve never been so blessed in my entire life.

The reason I published that piece and the reason I have published other pieces like it is to let people see the thinking of these men, who happen to reflect a large percentage of the fundamental Baptist movement.

And I wanted to provide an answer to this thinking, because I am not going to give these men a free forum (far larger than they would typically have) to spout their Independent Baptist tradition nonsense without a biblical challenge.

I publish these things as teaching tools. In that particular report I dealt with some very substantive issues (e.g., Quick Prayerism, Contemporary Christian Music, separation from the

world, idolatry of man, shallow unbiblical thinking, following IBaptist tradition rather than God's Word). These are the type of things that are going to destroy many more fundamental Baptist churches before everything is said and done.

I don't mind repeating these things. Repetition is an absolutely necessary element of effective teaching.

Further, I reach different people with different articles. Not only does my own e-mailing list change from day to day, but also the articles are redistributed to different groups of people on a constantly-changing basis.

Let me take this occasion to remind my readers that the only proper way to test a preacher is by the clear teaching of the Bible. This is what I have always taught church members in regard to their relationship with pastors. (See "Keys to Fruitful Church Membership" at the Way of Life web site.) Pastors have God-given authority to lead the churches, but they are not lords and they are not to be given "unquestioning loyalty." We should test preachers, but not by our opinions or by what some other preacher does or by what we have seen in another church or by what our grandparents taught us or by the Baptists of old or the "church fathers" or any thing else. Everyone has an opinion about how to do things, and if preachers heeded the people's opinions they would never accomplish God's will in their ministries. You can't effectively obey 2 Timothy 4:2 unless you first take solemn heed to 2 Timothy 4:1.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

The things of the ministry are not determined by a democratic vote. We must test preachers, but only by the clear, properly interpreted teaching of God's Word. That is the sole authority for faith and practice. We should always give preachers the benefit of the doubt.

If you can take the Bible and show that I am wrong about something, you should do that and insofar as I am not following God's Word you should not follow me. But if it is simply a matter of your opinion against the preacher's, the preacher's opinion must rule because he is the one who is called of God and he is the one who will answer to God and he is obviously the one God will lead.

Why would God show *you* how to conduct the Way of Life ministry when He has called *me* to do it?

If you will receive it, this truth will help you not only as a church member but also in your relationship with preachers in general.

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